

RFP – SMALL GRID DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM (SGDC) CREATION

Amendment 1 – Questions and Answers

Questions/Comments and Answers

Q1: What is the budget allowed for the project as defined in the RFP?

A1: We do not have a budget that we can share with Proposers. As noted in Section 3 of the RFP, each Proposer should submit a Proposal with the most favorable terms that they can offer.

Q2: How many stakeholders are currently engaged in delivery of services through the Small Grid Development Consortium initiative?

A2: Nine – please see Answer #3 below.

Q3: Who are the current partners of the Small Grid Development Consortium initiative?

A3: Tennessee Tech University, West Virginia University, Penn State University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), MIT Lincoln Lab, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), The Biz Foundry Entrepreneurship Center, Knoxville Entrepreneurship Center, and BRITE Energy Innovators Entrepreneurship Center.

Q4: Who are the current customers of the Small Grid Development Consortium initiative?

A4: We are unable to share client information due to NDA agreements. However, we can confirm that our target clients include rural electric utilities (publicly owned or board-controlled, not private), small business startups, and small electrical engineering firms operating within the Appalachian Regional footprint.

Q5: What is the operational status of the Hilltop modeling software today?

A5: The operational status of HILLTOP+ is strong. We are currently equipped to model lithium batteries, solar arrays, and EV charging networks. Additionally, we are actively working to expand our capabilities to include wind energy, non-lithium batteries, and generative synthetic datasets.

Q6: How many customers currently benefit from Hilltop modeling software today?

A6: While that information is confidential, the goal is to complete 27 rural electric utility modeling projects within the period of performance. Multiple clients were modeled during a previous phase of a different grant, alongside several modeling projects for startup companies. Additionally, we have developed training materials to enable small business electrical

engineering firms to train on the system and use HILLTOP+ for fee-for-service modeling projects within their own businesses.

Q7: What states will be served by the new non-profit?

A7: Our focus in the first few years will be on serving the states within the Appalachian Regional Commission footprint, with the goal of expanding to serve the entire United States in the future.

Q8: Is it the intent of this RFP that the strategic planning process would include development of a business model for the new non-profit organization?

A8: Yes.

Q9: Who owns the IP of the Hilltop software?

A9: Currently, Tennessee Tech and the universities that contribute to the development of new features own the intellectual property (IP) of the HILLTOP software. We will need assistance from a consultant to guide the transfer of all IP ownership to the nonprofit, in coordination with the universities.

Q10: How many entities own IP that is anticipated to transfer to the new non-profit?

A10: Three, currently, but there may be more in the short future.

Q11: How many entities own equipment that is anticipated to transfer to the new non-profit?

A11: Five.

Q12: Is it anticipated that TN Tech will continue to serve as the operating agent of the new non-profit?

A12: Tennessee Tech will operate as a key member of the operations, but we are unsure how to structure this arrangement within the context of a nonprofit. We need to consider all members as operators carefully, as we envision equitable contributions from all parties. As such, we must determine an effective operations strategy to ensure alignment and balance.

Q13: Is the hiring of non-profit leadership and staff expected as part of this effort?

A13: Hiring nonprofit leadership and staff is not an expected deliverable from the consultant. However, we do need a clear plan outlining how to proceed with this process, including job descriptions and other relevant details.

Q14: Is the Tennessee Valley Authority envisioned as a member SGDR project?

A14: Yes.

Q15: Is the Appalachian Regional Commission envisioned as a member of the SGDR project?

A15: That is possible but not likely.

Q16: Are all participating organizations in the cooperative expected to be located in Tennessee? If not, please provide the names of members that may be located in other states?

A16: No. Please see Answer #3 above.

Q17: Who will be legal counsel for Tennessee Tech? Are they available to assist with legal review of documents being filed with the state of Tennessee and collaborate regarding compliance requirements and governance structures?

A17: Tennessee Tech's legal counsel will be involved, along with our IP attorney on retainer. The Tennessee Tech Office of Sponsored Programs will also assist, and the legal teams and Sponsored Programs offices from our partner organizations will be engaged to support the legal review of documents. They will also help ensure compliance with governance and regulatory requirements, as well as determine the best state for filing the nonprofit.

End of Questions/Answers.